

The Tribune Institute

Housekeeping as a Profession

The Bajnotti Trust Fund for the Encouragement of the "Family Virtues"

The Count and King Solomon Hold Similar Views

A MORE puzzling dilemma has never beset an American city than the one in which Providence, R. I., finds itself in endeavoring to determine how the first "Rosiere" shall be awarded to a daughter of the common people who, by her conduct and family virtues, best deserves it.

The Mayor Throws Up His Hands

When the late Count Paul Bajnotti, of Turin, Italy, included this provision in his last will and testament as one of the bequests to the native city of his wife, he little realized the embarrassment to which it would put the Mayor, whose duty it is to make the award; nor could he have foreseen the controversy that has arisen as a result of the phrase, "daughter of the common people," which has quite a foreign flavor as the awarding of the Rosiere itself.

The fact that Providence is a city of some 270,000 inhabitants at the present time makes the selection of a girl for such an award a task beyond accomplishment, in the eyes of Mayor Joseph H. Gainer, and he has literally thrown up his hands in despair. Solutions of the problem have been advanced by various persons, but none has been considered as entirely practicable. How the question will be settled is still being debated, and the ultimate solution is a matter of doubt in the minds of many citizens.

The award carries with it the income for a year of \$10,000, and the girl will be known as the "Carrie Brown Rosiere Fund," in memory of the count's wife, who died a number of years ago. The will provides that the award shall take place about July 17 of each year. The following details were also supplied by the count:

"I suggest that the prize be given with some solemnity, that the winner be crowned with roses and be called Rosiere, and that the prize be designated as a prize of virtue. I thus show an old and pretty custom of one place in France."

How to decide who the common people are; how to select the winner



Count Paul Bajnotti, the founder of the fund to crown domestic virtues with roses

from the thousands of girls who may be eligible to compete; how to select the commission that will select the girl are all questions that must be considered, and thus far no decision has been reached.

A Jury of Solomons Needed

There is a wide divergence of opinion in the matter and no one in Providence has felt that he or she has yet arrived at a solution. A number of plans have been suggested, but none has been found entirely flawless. A general feeling has been expressed that the problem is impossible of solution and a number of persons have concluded that the bequest of Count Bajnotti should be "lined with thanks" on the ground that the plan is impracticable.

Mayor Gainer himself has come to no satisfactory conclusion, although he has considered the matter seriously and discussed its various phases with many people.

One section of the will explains that the winner of the prize must be marriageable and she must be at least twenty years of age.

"This," says Mayor Gainer, "would suggest that the award should go to a girl who is about to marry. In other words, it is meant to be considered as a dowry. But I have not the slightest clue to the method of choosing the girl."

"The obstacles that stand in the

Solomon Brought Up to Date—For the Benefit of Providence (R. I.)

- 1—Who can find a virtuous woman, for her price is far above rubies.
 - 2—She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.
 - 3—She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.
 - 4—She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
 - 5—She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.
 - 6—She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night.
 - 7—She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
 - 8—She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.
 - 9—She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.
 - 10—She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.
 - 11—Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.
- Proverbs—Chapter XXXI: 10-31.

way of selecting a winner are many, and as far as I can see they are insurmountable. No one with whom I have talked has been able to give me an iota of help in the matter and I am at a loss to know just what course to take. It is my belief that there are too many factors to be considered in a contest of this kind to make it practicable in a city of the size of Providence.

"The girl who might most deserve the award would likely not be considered, for the simple reason that she would not be known. And then, as far as I can see, there are doubtless hundreds, if not thousands, of girls who would be equally qualified for the honor. I can see no way by which an equitable judgment can be made."

The Mayor's feeling is shared by practically every one in Providence. Many have suggested plans, but no one has convinced even himself that a completely satisfactory procedure can be found.

Who Are the "Common People"?

The first question that naturally arises is, Who are the common people?—for it is from this "class" that the girl must come. After interviewing prominent clubwomen and various public officials it is found that it is practically a unanimous opinion that there are no "common people," or there are "only common people," in this country. That is, there are no classes in America, and the question is left there.

But what Count Bajnotti had in mind when he designated the common people is another matter. Most Providence folk agree that the prize must be given to a daughter of a

wage earner, or to one whose family is of moderate means.

Mrs. Henry L. Cushman, president of the Rhode Island Women's Club, is one of the most emphatic in eliminating the class distinction.

"We have no classes in this country," she declared. "We have nothing that corresponds to the peasant class with which Count Bajnotti was familiar. The provision of the will must undoubtedly be interpreted to mean that the winner of the prize shall be a girl whose family is not wealthy. How to select this girl is another thing. The city is too large for any commission to cover with a view to discovering the one girl who shall be considered above all others in family virtue. It seems to me that the idea is entirely impracticable and I believe that the Mayor would be justified in declining to accept the bequest on those grounds."

"The only possible way to arrive at

even a reasonable verdict in a contest of this kind, it seems to me, would be to consider the candidates from a limited area. That is, the prize could be awarded to a girl in one of the large factories one year, and the next year another factory could supply the winner, until the entire city had been covered.

Means and Ways

"It might be practicable to divide the city into zones and have the winner chosen from each zone in succession. Even these methods would have their defects, and I am quite convinced that any plan would prove unsatisfactory in many ways."

"As for choosing the judges for the award, I think that some women might be of help on the commission. The heads of the schools and others who come in contact with the youth

of the city would be 'preferable as judges, I believe.'"

Mrs. Charles H. Remington, president of the Rhode Island Congress of Mothers, can see no way of awarding the prize to the satisfaction of all concerned. She believes, however, that a plan can be worked out with a degree of success. Concerning the matter, Mrs. Remington said:

"Candidates for the prize might be nominated by a group plan. That is, the employees of a large department store could nominate a girl from their number. Another candidate could come from a second group of girls who are acquainted with one another, and so on through the city. By the process of elimination through a series of conditions named by the commission the number of candidates could be narrowed down to comparatively few. Upon this number the judges could vote for a final decision."

A Written Examination In Domestic Science

It has also been suggested that a written examination could be planned for all girls of the city who wished to compete for the prize. The questions would aim to bring out the characters of the contestants, to show their knowledge of domestic matters and their ideas and ideals of marriage and home life. Through the answers the winner of the prize could be selected by the commission, whose members should be carefully chosen from the clergy, school principals and men and women prominent in welfare work.

The awarding of the Rosiere is an entirely new idea in this country, but it is a quaint old custom



The Carrie Brown Clock Tower given to Brown University by Count Bajnotti in memory of his wife

American Feminism Gives Her Idea of Womanly Virtues

she says that an agreeable interpretation of the bequest may be made.

"No doubt the count had the best of intentions and wanted to do something to show his high regard for American women," said Miss Young last week. "The difficulty is that he selected a tribute that is no American."

Will Needs Americanization

"I see only two possibilities in the method of making the award. Either the spirit of the count's will should be Americanized, or the whole thing should be taken to Europe and worked out there, where the custom is still practiced in where it originated."

"In this country the 'virtuous girl' is the one who can meet situations most effectively, the girl who gets out and makes a living for her widowed mother, the girl who helps educate younger brothers and sisters, the girl who wins a scholarship and aspires to make the most of all opportunities. That is the American girl we consider most 'virtuous.'"

Initiative Also is a Home Virtue

"Suppose a girl really adept in the 'family virtues' mentioned in the count were selected. Undoubtedly, she would make a good wife and mother, if she were married to a man who could afford to support her. But if she were like many of the married women of the industrial population she would have to go out and help earn the living for the family. And if she had to work outside her home what would she be fitted to do? As nearly as I can make out she would be fitted to work in a bakery, perhaps, or go out to work as a domestic."

"In Americanizing the count's scheme I believe that a committee of women and men should be chosen each year to elect the girl to receive the prize. Instead of the old fashioned 'domestic qualities' stipulated by the count, they should judge from American virtues. The should judge from efficiency, initiative and other qualities we expect to find in the American girl."

"The Woman Citizen" Has Her Say

ROSE YOUNG, of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and editor of "The Woman Citizen," has no sympathy with the provisions of Count Bajnotti's will. In spite of her antipathy for all that it implies

A Churchwoman Protests

APPARENTLY it is "up" to the women parishioners of the Protestant Episcopal Church to cultivate the humble spirit of the Syro-Phoenician woman, who urged in her own behalf that the "dogs might eat of the crumbs that fall from the children's table."

In view of the sweeping concessions given to women politically in many countries the extreme timidity of the Protestant Episcopal Church as evinced in the recent Detroit convention would be amusing if it were not exasperating. It would have been hard for that body to have given a more striking or conclusive proof that their position, and the position they wish the Church to take in the march of civilization, is in the "safe, glad rear," not the dreadful van.

There is far more reason that the Church should accord women full citizenship than that the state should do so. The proportion of women who are active in church work, who are members, communicants, workers on its various committees, contributors to its funds, is to the number of men about six to one. And to exclude women from voting is about as reasonable as if in the teachers' association women were excluded and only male members permitted to vote.

Taxation Without Representation

On the admission of women the venerable body got about as far as our legislators were twenty-five years ago; namely, a committee was appointed to consider the advisability of having a "House of Churchwomen," which should have no legislative power, but could meet and confer and make recom-

The Levite Was the Paid Worker

If ever the "House of Churchwomen" gets past the committee stage, some of us may ask to consider whether the army of paid workers develops a really desirable type. Uplift work has often a deleterious effect upon the worker. The moral effect of being paid to do a good example has often turned many an earnest, simple man or woman into a hypocrite or a Pharisee—hard and businesslike toward human need. The Good Samaritan was not a paid worker—the Levite was that. The Samaritan had no even time to see his "case" through and paid what was necessary out of his own pocket. Probably the Levite reported it to the proper authorities and the man would have died before these acted.

Assuredly we need men and women of force and idealism and heroism. Since the early days of the Republic we have never needed them as we have to-day. But few of us look any longer to the church to produce such—not even with the aid of \$70,000,000 drives!

A Churchwoman.

Rent a Fifth Avenue Bus

By MARGO HARTE

THE housing problem has struck all countries, thanks to four and more years of war and almost a total cessation of building. Rent strikes and rent riots are the order of the day in Europe and America.

But in Europe people have had a long time getting roofs over their heads since about 1916, and they have become most ingenious. They live in converted bathhouses and chicken coops and "trams"—our old-fashioned street cars. And they've made very nice homes out of these places. Could an American family live in an abandoned streetcar, we wonder? Italians and Poles and others in old box cars or discarded passenger cars upon disused railway tracks in out-of-the-way places. The writer has seen such places, from the outside, he said. But she doubts very much if a New York family could take up their abode in an old Fifth Avenue bus and live there comfortably and happily. Yet it is done in London.

When the house shortage became acute in that great city the government commandeered a few dilapidated buses that had been lying in a dump heap for some time and had them drawn to the outskirts of London, not far from a munitions factory, where there was great need of housing. The rental was very low, and, like the bathhouses used in other towns, the buses made good temporary homes. The shortage of places to live continues in England, and tram lines are selling buses too old for street

use for a matter of three or four pounds sterling—\$15 or \$20. The purchaser hauls the bus to the side of the road, not too far from his place of work, or into a lot, and makes it into a home.

The wheels are taken off, and a cellar dug beneath, bricked or boarded round to create warmth. The floor of the car is lined with weatherproof paper and the family carpet put down. All the seats have been torn out of the lower deck and the windows hung with thick white curtains. The family eat in here and sleep in bunks built, preferably, across one end, usually what was the back end of the bus. The front end is the outside door.

The top of the bus, which is reached by the winding ladder so familiar to all of us who ride on buses, is a kind of fair weather outdoor room for the family. Some folks stretch an awning over it and use it for a parlor, for courting, for the babies' playground and napping spot.

Of course, the interior of the bus makes narrow quarters. The stove in it, the cooking, would not please a fastidious person. But poor people must live! Any roof is better than no roof!

One wonders if several buses could not be linked together to make one house, set upon stilts or a deep cellar, and pumping and heating system put in! The writer has in mind a houseboat of two decks that used to be idle every winter. But a few years ago its owner propped it up on a wharf, high and dry, and proceeded to live there summer and winter. He installed acetylene gas and steam heat, leading his pipes from a compact furnace set in a corner of the after deck. He said to be very comfortable.



The fountain presented to the city of his adoption by the home-loving Italian-American

The Real Autocrats Arrive

ANECDOTE No. 1

THE Suburban Lady had lured her friend out for a week end with hints of motor trips into highways and byways. "But first," said she, at the station, "I must run down to see why my laundress, after accepting a perfectly good but discarded dining room rug, failed to come on the appointed day. Katy, my sister's maid, is coming along as interpreter."

Spotlessly neat was the kitchen hat was her destination. No wonder, thought the friend, its owner was in demand.

"Good afternoon, Olga," began the Suburban Lady, plunging at once into her complaint as an alert, clean-looking woman appeared in answer to her knock. "Why didn't

you come Thursday, as you promised?"

"Oh, I no could come. Too much work at home. You get another laundress, Mrs. Jones." Quite casually Olga offered her suggestion.

"But you promised!"

Olga shrugged her shoulders. "You get another laundress," she repeated.

The Suburban Lady turned to the interpreter. "Tell her, Katy," she directed, "I will pay her \$3.75 if she will give me Monday." Then, under her breath to her friend, "She's such a good laundress."

Katy translated the alluring offer. But Olga shrugged her shoulders and spoke rapidly. Katy turned with a queer expression upon her face.

"She say"—and it was obvious

that even Katy was a bit staggered, "she say she will if you will come for her and take her home in your car every Monday."

As her visitor followed a very angry Suburban Lady out to her car she marveled and, turning, she saw Olga give a third shrug as she coolly watched their departure.

"Plenty more places," that shrug fairly shouted.

ANECDOTE No. 2

The newspaper woman sped back to her bachelor apartment at 6 o'clock after a square day's work—papers come out more so, not less, on election days. During a hasty toilet she observed that her bed was unmade, and as "maid service" is one of the rights of the renter, as specified in the lease she knocked light-heartedly at the door of the

maid in question and said cheerfully and confidently, "Mrs. Blank, I think you forgot to make my bed."

"Oh, no," responded the maid blithely, "it is a legal holiday and I made no beds." "Personally," said the N. W., "I have worked all day as usual and now I must come home at midnight and make my own bed—is that the idea?" "I supposed you would be home to-day," came the answer. The woman fled, fearing that she might be moved to primitive vengeance, and another feud was on between employer and employee where before there had been peace and pious tips.

"Grab all you can get and give as little as possible in return for it" is an unprofitable motto eventually for either mistress or maid, employer or employee.

A. L. P.

